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ABSTRACT

This document contains 61 poems, short stories, and personal reflections that were selected from more than 300 entries submitted by adult literacy students throughout Ohio. The works included are as follows: "The Apartment" (Shirley Pettit); "The Last Poem Before I Die" (Lonnie Littleton); "A Family Lost" (Mary Rapp); "Inner Child" (Regina Mulkey); "Life Changes" (Michael McFadden); "Blood" (Toshia Smith); "Life as a Single Father" (Dale Sherman); "A Turtle?" (Marjie Mustard); "The Paper" (Christine Seman); "Fade Myself" (Faith D. Crabtree); "Wings to Fly" (Karen Barnes); "My Life on the Streets; Mi Vida en las Calles" (Christian Velez); "Relax, Be Gentle" (Karen S. Smith); "Divorce" (Carol E. Gessner); "Hobbies" (Linda Montgomery); "Hit Man" (Diane Brown); "Liquid Nightmare" (Larry Hurd); "Life and Choices" (Patricia Santos); "Shaking Hands" (Mahammed Kutubuddin); "I Never Dreamed" (Roberto Benitez); "Goodbye, Love" (Christopher Barker); "Old Friends" (Cynthia Rush); "Love" (Adam D. Rice); "A Christmas Rose" (Twila Cross); "Haircut" (Kum Sun Kim); "Mommy" (Renee Glaze); "A Day in the Life of a Typical Mother" (Sally White); "New World" (Christine Seman), "Fly Away...Beside Me" (Monique Ross); "My Grandson and Me" (Art Massengil); "My Teacher" (Monique G. Ross); "September" (Prescious Eutsey); "Dear Mom" (Dawn Bradley); "Playing Tricks" (Carrie Miller); "Being Proud" (Fumiko Adair); "The Butterfly" (Laura Lee Green-Kulcak); "A Tennessee Childhood" (Art Massengill); "Boyhood Days" (Earl Willford); "The Night a P.T. Boat Prowled Lake Erie" (Philip H. Edwards); "Supreme Court of India" (Mahammed Kutubuddin); "My Mountains" (Milita Stringer); "Family Memories" (Laura Lee Green-Kulcak); "A Terrible Day in My Life" (Thuy Nguyen); "A Love Letter" (Tatyana O'Neill); "The Street Beggars" (Quang Minh Cao); "Autumn" (Anh Phuong Nguyen); "Ponies" (Cynthia Harrison); "Morning" (Marjie Mustard); "Winter" (Art Massengill); "Untouched Island" (Heather Tilley); "Butterfly" (Anh Phuong Nguyen); "Winter's Fun" (Carol Rudder); "Our Unusual Household

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and Its Inhabitants" (Angela Murphy); "The Little Lame Donkey" (Etta Lorene Bailey); "High Pressure Performance" (Jeff Bell); "The Cellar" (Katherine White); "Restoring a '55 Chevy" (Ed Garcia); "Peace" (Vickie Hargraves); "Silent Tears" (Christian Velez); "Sunglasses" (Amanda JoAnna Edge); "A New Beginning" (Tri Huynh); and "A Family of God's Servants" (M. Foltz). Concluding the document are brief biographies of some of the authors and a list of 141 adult literacy students who submitted entries that were not published. (MN)

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Beginnings IV

A publication of adult student writing of the

Ohio Writers' Conference

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Ohio Literacy Resource Center

April 20, 2001

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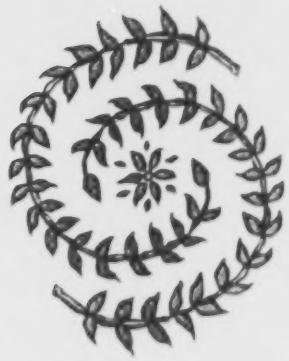
This 4th edition of Beginnings
is dedicated in memory of
Christopher Graves,
the loving son of Penny Graves
of the OLRC.



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Foreword

In this 4th edition of *Beginnings*, the Ohio Literacy Resource Center (OLRC) once again celebrates the voices of adult literacy students throughout the state of Ohio. This collection of original works represents a variety of genres in which the authors effectively and creatively demonstrate the power of the written word. *Beginnings IV* features poetry, short stories, and personal reflections selected from over 300 entries. We are proud of these students and their outstanding achievements as writers and applaud them for sharing their talents.

The authors of *Beginnings IV* and their teachers were honored during the 4th Annual Writers' Conference sponsored by the OLRC in the spring of 2001 at Mohican State Park. Additionally, this edition of *Beginnings* recognizes *every* student who took the initiative to submit his/her writing to the OLRC for review for this publication. We commend all of the students and their teachers for their dedication to writing as a vehicle for self-expression, as well as a tool for enhancing literacy learning. The students who submitted entries that are not included in *Beginnings IV* are listed in the *Honorable Mention* section of this book.

Finally, the OLRC would like to acknowledge the following people who contributed to the success of this project. *Beginnings IV* would not "be" without the support of: Jim Bowling, of the Ohio Department of Education, for his continued financial support; Nancy Padak, the OLRC Faculty Advisor, for her extraordinary leadership, enthusiasm for the project, and editorial assistance; Marty Ropog and Dianna Baycich, Co-Directors of the OLRC, for their expert organizational skills and support; Connie Sapin, the OLRC Literacy Projects Coordinator, for her incredible guidance; Chris Fullerton, the OLRC Webmistress, for her critical web editorial assistance; Carrie Spence, for her countless hours of work including assisting with the cover design, publication logistics, and conference organization; Penny Graves for her

assistance with formatting, and to Andrea Yates, as well as the other student workers at the OLRC, who diligently worked with reams of paper as this publication unfolded.

The OLRC also thanks the following people who reviewed submissions: Bryan Bardine, Dianna Baycich, Lynda Cornett, Judy Hendershot, Chris McKeon, Nancy Padak, Connie Sapin, and Lisa White.

The staff of the OLRC hopes that you find this latest edition of *Beginnings* a memorable literary adventure. Enjoy reading reflective pieces about loved ones, memories of long ago and faraway, musings about living things, and a medley of other treasured thoughts, entitled lagniappe!

Chris McKeon
Writers' Conference 2001 Organizer

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Ohio Literacy Resource Center

Enhancing Adult Literacy in Ohio

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Please note that, subsequent to the publication of Beginnings IV, the OLRC was informed by a non-ABLE student, Van Nguyen, that the content of the story on pages 69-70 resembles two compositions that he wrote for college English courses. The OLRC acknowledges the strong similarity.

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Life and Learning

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The Apartment

Cats scat
Dogs in a cage behave
People in the hall want to stall
Loud noises no faces I see
Insanity is what it will be!

~ Shirley Pettit

The Last Poem Before I Die

I have mastered every river
Beaten any foe
Crushed any obstacle
And left it lying on the road.
Yet, life how sad and empty
As far as I can see,
Victories and worldly possessions
Are all but vanity.
Nobody ever told me
The road would be easy
Without a headache or two.
I'm just trying to make it to heaven
Before my time is due.
I've done mastered every river
Beaten every foe
Crushed any obstacle
And left it lying on the road.
Yet, life how sad and empty
As far as I can see,
Victories and worldly possessions
Are all but vanity.

~ Lonnie Littleton

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A Family Lost

Dark emotions fall from my eyes.
As I remember the hurt of deceitful lies.
My blood runs cold and my heart turns to stone,
As I try to find the reason why he left us alone.
The tears of frustration run to my lips,
The ones he used to softly kiss.
The loneliness embraces me,
And I try to break free.
But I feel as though true love will never again find me.
A game of chance,
A family lost.
The price he now must pay,
His family was the cost.
The two that love him most,
He now lives without.
He has no idea what life is all about.

~ Mary Rapp

Inner Child

Dark yearning eyes peering at me
Small waves crashing into the sea
Dreams come and go through my head
Hopes and terror drowning me instead
The past that doesn't want me anymore
Memories of a longing, I do adore
People running to pass me by
Without even stopping to tell me why
A little girl dies from excruciating pain
Nobody even knows her name

~ Regina Mulkey

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Life Changes

The highlight of my life in the year 2000 was my decision to focus life in a more positive light. I have my parents and best friends to thank for helping me realize the light. I remember when my friends told me that the other guys I was hanging out with were not good people. I just laughed it all off and told them they were wrong. When I finally realized my true friends were right, it was too late. I had to spend five days in the Juvenile Detention Center. During those five days I kept thinking to myself that jail is not for me. I just didn't belong in jail. This is where I thought about my life and how to change it. When I got my butt in gear, I contacted my friends and told them how sorry I was because I didn't listen to them. I told them that from now on I wouldn't ignore them. They continue to be my good friends, and now I am living a better life.

~ Michael McFadden

Blood

I feel distracted and upset at times
when I can't seem to find the most important
answer in my mind.

I get stressed every day that goes by.
You just let my point of view pass on by.

If you really knew what kind of person I am
you would understand.
I am not just some woman trying to make it in life.
I **am** that woman making it in life.

I will strive to my last breath.
I will go to the deepest depth.
I won't look back.
That light ain't as bright
as the one I have in my sight.

I will put up the biggest fight…

I knew you as my blood.
That all changed when you tossed me out
like a cup of water and just took my daughter.

You ain't no kind of mother.

~ Toshia Smith

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Life as a Single Father

Did you ever look through the eyes of a child? I did, and I didn't like what I saw in our home life through the eyes of my sons, Taylor and Alex. They lived in an unstable home with an alcoholic mother and frazzled father. Their mother's illness frightened them. The boys would cling to me and from their fear my need to protect them grew. My sons deserved a safe home to grow up in. Our marriage ended in divorce, and I began a new life as a single dad.

The divorce changed my life dramatically. I am now a single father with primary custody of my sons. Our family situation is somewhat unique. In most cases of divorce the mother is the custodial parent. I have the joy and the challenge of being both father and mother. As in most families, we have our ups and downs, but now we live without fear and with a lot of love. It's a good life.

Life as a single father does have some moments of irritation. In today's world many people think that a father can't nurture his children. Well-meaning but ignorant individuals have instructed me on how to raise my sons. Everyone from the doctor to the grocery store cashier offers unsolicited child-rearing advice. Some people believe children need a mother to experience a proper upbringing. I've learned children need a responsible adult who loves them and cares for them. The gender of that person doesn't really matter.

As a single father I spend a lot of time with Taylor and Alex. We enjoy making crafts, wood working, fixing things together and participating in 4-H activities. I love to spend time with my boys. I love seeing what they do and sharing their lives. It's not easy sometimes; in fact it can be very hard to get all the things done that need to get done. There are bills to pay, cooking and cleaning to do, homework, and caring for our many animals. There is also the need to provide meaningful activities that will help the boys grow and develop. Children need a variety of activities and experiences

to learn about life. I've learned to put my boys first. I realize they will be young only for a short time, so the time I spend with them now is very important not only to them, but also to me.

When you make your children the first priority of your life, having a relationship with a woman is a challenge. Just to go out to dinner can be taxing if you're a single parent. The extra effort dating takes can make it very hard to build a good relationship with someone. Finding time to get to know a woman is important, but in my life it's hard to do. It's also important to see if you like that person before the children get to know her. If she has children, you need to see if the children can get along. Complex, isn't it? Clearly, the life of a single father is busy and challenging, but it is also rewarding. Like most things in life, it's what you make of it.

~ Dale Sherman

A turtle?

Enough is enough! It occurs to me that it would be nice to be a turtle. With the protection of a hard shell and the slow pace of contentment. Even your limbs, heart, and spirit could be protected just by drawing within. It would be warm, dark, and secure in this shell. And green is a comfortable color for me! What could be better than a turtle on a beach? You could turtle-surf in the waves, or turtle-tan, and have turtle love in the shade of the trees! I've convinced myself, I want to be a turtle!

But only for a day.

~ Marjie Mustard

The Paper

Morning is
A new sheet of paper
For you to write on.

Whatever you want to say,
All day,
Until night
Folds it up
And files it away.

The bright words and dark words
Are gone
Until dawn
And a new day
To write on.

~ Christine Seman

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Fade Myself

Ready to explode
Wanting to scream
To smoke a big fat blunt
Would ruin my dreams

One day at a time
24 hours a day
The old me is slowly
Fading away

Take care of my business
And ignore the rest
No matter how hard it seems
It's all for the best

~ Faith D. Crabtree

Wings to Fly

I would love to have a set
Of wings,
To look from above to see what
Life brings.
I have to stop asking the
Question "Why?"
If I am ever gonna have the
Chance to fly.
I will focus on the question
"How?"
To make a positive change in
My life now.
This is the one thing I
Have learned
To keep myself from getting
Burned.
I am so grateful for this
Program called Wings,
It's given me the chance to
Learn so many things.
But I must now say "thank
You" and "good-bye."
For it is now my turn,
My turn to fly!

~ Karen Barnes

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My Life on the Streets
Mi Vida en las Calles

Las calles, The streets
Of my youth.

Con mis panas, My friends
Shooting hoops.

My height on the court
High like my thoughts.

My head full of smoke
My life was a joke.

Hanging out all night
My parents uptight.

The streets
Are not my life.

Standing on blocks
Listening to hip-hop.

Running from cops
Hearing gun shots.

My life almost fouled out
Like my games on the court
1, 2, 3, 4 . . .

~ Christian Velez

Relax, Be Gentle

Relax, be gentle by the ocean day and night.
Listen to the sound of the waves as they rush by.
Hear the birds as they chirp in the sky, flying over
And under the clouds, oh so high.
Listen to the sound of the wind, wildly howling on
A cool, windy night.
Feel the raindrops pouring down all over your body
As you shiver by the coldness.
See the lightning in the sky as it brings a night-light into
The darkness of the night.
Hear the thunder as it roars so loudly, full of authority,
Full of demand like a high voltage power line out of control.
See the calmness up in the sky after the storm. Feel the
Peacefulness of the ocean, oh so quiet.
Relax, be gentle by the ocean day and night.

~ Karen S. Smith

Divorce

Divorce means many different things to people. It meant **Devastation** for my family and me. It happened so quickly that we were very **Insensitive** to each other's feelings, and we said **Vicious** things about each other. We were even **Cruel** to each other.

Our divorce was so **Overwhelming** that it was hard to **Realize** what we were doing. I believe with all my heart that we truly loved each other, but **Evil** influences came into our lives and destroyed what we both believed in. In our own human weaknesses, we were unable to overcome the circumstances that caused us to fail in our marriage.

I speak from my heart and encourage anyone who is married to try to work it out because the hurt from **DIVORCE** lasts a lifetime.

D=DEVASTATION
I=INSENSITIVE
V=VICIOUS
O=OVERWHELMING
R=REALIZE
C=CRUEL
E=EVIL

Each word has a real meaning to what **DIVORCE** can cause.

~ Carol E. Gessner

Hobbies

A hobby is like a side track ride that you take in life--out of the ordinary hum drum of everyday living. It's not just a nice side trip you are taking, but it can be a very profitable business adventure along the way.

Along this trip, all cares are left behind. Your eyes are set on a goal you want to reach, and you just know you can do it.

Traveling along, depression gets off in the valley; anxiety takes a leap into the troubled waters of Lake Worry; panic gets off at the Gate of Fear. My track is now clear and my thoughts utter, "Joy cometh in the morning."

Nothing can stop me now. My thoughts and hands work effortlessly on a project that is going to turn into a beautiful masterpiece. On and on I work, making things from a few odds and ends.

As I finish, I think of what I have accomplished on my journey, and I think of the person who will take it home, never realizing the journey that brought about this product.

~ Linda Montgomery

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Hit Man

Cancer is a terrible disease, but sometimes you see things in a different light. Everyone has life struggles along with hardships and pain. We all have our cross to bear, but you learn to let go and let God.

I lost my mother in a car accident when I was sixteen. That was my first big struggle. Then I got married at twenty-two and a series of problems began. The marriage was a flop. I had two kids from this marriage, a son and a daughter. My son's health was good, but my daughter had numerous health problems.

In 1990, my very best friend died. Before I could really get over missing her, my daughter got very sick again, and spent four days in intensive in critical condition. She finally got better, and as the years passed she really seemed to be doing better and not in the hospital as much. I started to breathe a little easier then.

One day I was exercising and started to change my sweater because I was hot and needed a cooler shirt. That is when I noticed a lump in my breast. My mind started to race, thinking, "This wasn't there all the time; where did it come from and when?" My heart dropped. My neighbor's daughter was dying from breast cancer. She looked so bad I couldn't bear to go over to see her, and she was much younger than I was!

I found out I had breast cancer. I felt like someone had kicked me in the stomach and I couldn't catch my breath. I broke down and cried in the nurse's arms. She even started to cry. I felt like I had no control over my life. Everything was going crazy.

My main concern at that time was if something happened to me, who would take care of my daughter?

I left the hospital and instead of catching the bus home, I decided to walk. It was about an hour walk and I cried all the way. I also prayed, " Just give me a sign; let me find a feather (this was a reminder of my mother) to let me know everything is going to be all right." I walked a little farther and looked down on the grass and there was my feather, lying there looking really beautiful to me! I picked it up and when I did, it seemed that the world lifted off my shoulders, not to mention my heart. This to me was like the Lord was saying to me, "I am the wind beneath your wings."

After that, things got better or at least my attitude did. I had really good friends and family to help me through. I was truly blessed to be alive and not to lose a breast because they first told me that I would. Prayer does change things!

I call cancer the "hit man" because it is a very scary thing, and you never know if or when it may return to try to take your life again. Although I had been stricken with cancer, it strengthened my faith.

Choose your battles carefully and don't let the small things get you down, especially things you can't change. Oh, by the way, it has been six years, and I'm doing well. No "hit man" and the feather I found? I still have it. It is in my Bible.

~ Diane Brown

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Liquid Nightmare

I sit at my desk that I bought at an auction for a few bucks, with an assignment to describe a picture out of a magazine. This picture wrenches my insides because I have lost many battles with "Old No. 7".

My picture is a bottle of Jack Daniels Tennessee Whiskey. One black labeled, square, heavy glass bottle sits on a black walnut rough-sawn table or a bar top, along with two glasses of the same whiskey on ice. The two seven-ounce glasses are two thirds full. Or is it one third empty?

The picture was taken in a room as dark as the table itself; you can't see past the shoulders of the bottle that keeps calling my name. I suppose the two glasses signify two friends having a few drinks, but by the time the last drink is poured, that friendship will be tested.

When you look past the historical name and old fashioned label, you see the whiskey itself, which looks like iced tea, but packs a powerful punch that will make you bark like a dog and gasp for your next breath.

If you can hold it down without surrendering the contents of your stomach, you will feel one of many different ways: you will wish you didn't throw up, wish you were never born, or know everyone is watching you drink your poison. Then you become the man you always wanted to be as well as accepted by the scumbags that are now your new friends.

Alcohol is like a tornado ripping through your neighborhood; it will smash the strongest building and leave a shack. It doesn't care whose house it destroys or leaves untouched. After it's done, the tornado leaves without a care and there's one hell of a mess for its victims to clean up and put their lives back together, with the fear of its return.

To me it doesn't matter if it's Busch Beer, a cheap bottle of Thunder Bird or Mad Dog 20/20, or a bottle of Crown Royal. "This tornado is back!" With no extra cost, when the cap is twisted off, the demon of deception is released. He will tell you, "Everything will be OK this time," and give you pointers on how to control it.

With one sip, your troubles seem to slip away, or worse yet, guilt and remorse creep in leaving you depressed or in a fit of anger. It'll make you feel ten feet tall and bullet proof or lower than well digger boots. But early the next morning, the troubles that seemed to slip away so easily are the first thing to greet you when you open your blood-shot eyes and are faced with the humiliation of your actions the night before.

So, when I look at this picture I see more than a dark room, two glasses and a bottle of whiskey. I see a troubled past and a bright future if I just turn the page.

A bit of irony: in small print it says, "Your friends at Jack Daniels remind you to drink responsibly." You have got to be kidding me! Responsibility is the first thing to go out the window.

~ Larry Hurd

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Life and Choices

I'd like everybody to
think a little bit about LIFE.
It gives us so many beautiful things,
but sometimes we ignore them because
we think about our tasks and problems most
of the time rather than the loveliness of flowers
or the enchantment of a child when he discovers
something new. We close our eyes to them.

Life brings difficulties but we can use them to
our advantage or let them destroy us. We are like
a rough rock, that becomes a diamond through
many cuts and polishings. It's true that
this stonecutting process can be painful,
but it always brings a lesson. Sometimes we do
not take advantage of this lesson and we continue
committing the same errors. We suffer and we
do not grow. Other times perhaps we can find
the solutions.

Who we are today, came from our choices
Yesterday, but our future depends only on
how we handle what life brings us.

Can we improve?
Yes, we can do this.
Think about it!
Try it!

~ Patricia Santos

Shaking Hands

People shake hands more frequently today than they did a few hundred years ago. In ancient times the hand was considered a symbol of power and strength. Primitive man used it to kill animals or fight against his enemies. Extended hands were taken to be a gesture of goodwill and friendship by ancient people.

The practice of shaking hands probably originated in ancient Greece. Greeks prayed before their gods with raised hands, a gesture of devotional acts in honor of the deities.

Nowadays, a handshake has become the most accepted form of greeting and occurs in the most varied cultural areas of the world with a few exceptions. The Japanese, for instance, normally do not shake hands; they bow and the degree of bending is related to the amount of respect due to the person being greeted. In India traditional form of greeting is a Namaste with folded hands. In the Middle East, people exchange greetings by kissing gently on each other's extended hands. However with the passage of time and the influx of Western culture, these forms of greetings are not a rule everywhere. Still these traditions exist among a large number of people in different regions.

A handshake can reveal one's hidden personality. A firm but smooth grip is considered the best handshake. It sends a message of warmth and friendliness. Handshaking usually accompanies all acts like introduction, farewell, gratitude, and congratulations. It is customary to shake every individual's hand when formally joining or departing from groups.

~ Mahammed Kutubuddin

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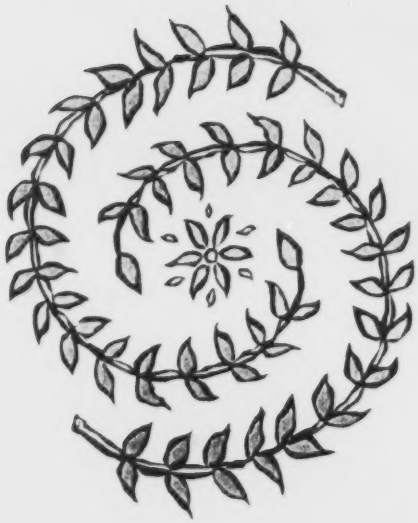
Loved Ones



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I Never Dreamed

I never dreamed one smile could fill
my world with worth and light
until your smile made all my days
so beautiful and bright.

I never realized someone
could change my life so much
until you shared your caring way,
your strength, your tender touch.

I never thought that love could be
this endless, deep, and true
until the day I gave my heart
and all my love to you.

~ Roberto Benitez

Goodbye, Love

Baby, I'm sorry, but I just can't stay strong
I'm tired of this hurting; I've been hurting too long
There's just too many problems running through my mind
You, my family, my friends, and just doing this time
When I read your letters my mind wants to explode
I wonder was that the truth or a lie you just told
It sounded for real, but it feels so fake
And holding on to this love could be my biggest mistake
See, I've written you so many wonderful letters
Spilling out words that could make your days better
I spilled the roses, and the violets too
I think I used the whole garden for you
But, in return this is all what I get
A whole lot of pain and the other bull----
Well, I've spilled out love lines as smooth as silk
But, now I'm spilling a mess, so start wiping the milk

'Cause I'm tired of this hurting; when I look at our love I can see it's not working
I'm tired of this hurting; I can't seem to find this true love I'm searching

I've held these words back as long as I could
Pretending to be happy just to make you feel good
But, on the inside, we know it just ain't working
I can't fake it no more, baby, I'm tired of this hurting
Sometimes I wonder is this all that it seems
Is it really love, or are you selling me dreams
Or are you just trying to make me feel shame
Making me look lame, by making me feel pain
Well, see, I know about love, and how to win
It's a little giving out, a little taking in
It takes two people working as a team
When you ever find love, then you'll see what I mean

You know, I've won with the best, I've even won with worst
Yet, with you I'm only losing, and that's what hurts
It's like you're using this love on me like a weapon
Well, I've taken your beating, now it's time I start stepping

'Cause I'm tired of this hurting; when I look at our love, I can see it's not working
I'm tired of this hurting; I can't seem to find this true love I'm searching

When I needed you the most, you weren't there
Sometimes I had to beg to get you to care
But no matter how wrong you had treated me
I did whatever I could whenever you needed me
And sometimes you used to make me cry
I used to sit in my cell wishing I could die
I felt so miserable, I felt so terrible
And now the pain has become unbearable
I love you unlike I've loved anyone else
If you were to leave me I'd probably kill myself
So that's why I have to end this before
You crush my world by walking out of the door

You see, I've stayed too long, but now I'm gone
I'm leaving these words with you to carry on
It might've gotten better, or maybe worse
But, instead a "good-bye, love" is coming first
I loved you then; I still love you now
You said you loved me too, but you didn't know how
So this is good-bye and my very last letter
I'm still hurting now, but I'm bound to feel better
I'm tired of wondering what this love will be
And I'm tired of always feeling like you're using me
I'm tired of hard working, for the love I've been searching
But most of all, I'm simply tired of this hurting

P.S.

I'm in the wind and gone again…You take it smooth, while I make this move...

~ Christopher Barker

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Old Friends

The first time I saw you
My face lit up like a light.
My eyes were shining and
The sun was bright.

But as we grew older
Our feelings started to change.
After you became a man,
You were not the same.

Our feelings for each other
Faded away.
I didn't want to go,
I wanted you to stay.

I could not stand the thought of your leaving me
And I cried at times because I didn't understand
Why you left me behind.
But every day you were on my mind.

~ Cynthia Rush

Love

Love.

Is it really the best thing for us?

Does it destroy or replenish the caring we remember as a child?

Is it a nightmare?

Is it a dream come true?

Only loneliness can tell you the truth.

It's not in the mind,

It's not in the soul,

It's not in the heart.

It's in the belief!

You learn that through the experience of losing it.

~ Adam D. Rice

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A Christmas Rose

I snatched a Christmas Rose
from a bush filled with thorns.
Its soft, velvety petals
seemed only slightly worn.

As the graceful bud unfolded
in perfect harmony,
delicate leaves reached up
for all the world to see.

A rose filled with wonder,
magnificence without end.
A miracle of Christmas
for you with love, my friend.

~ Twila Cross

Haircut

I had my hair cut a few days ago. When my kids came home from school, they screamed and said, "Mom, what happened to your hair?" I asked them if they liked my hairstyle and they said, "No, you look like a monster." Because they didn't like my hair, I woke up at 5:30 the next morning, took a shower, washed my hair, and stood at the mirror looking at my hair. I spent one whole hour fixing my hair. I combed it and tried various styles. I felt that I wasted too much time on myself.

My children woke up and I fixed them breakfast. I went back to looking at myself in the mirror and playing with my hair. I decided to tie my hair up and showed it to my kids. They said it looked much better than before. I explained to them that it's not how you look on the outside but what's inside your heart that counts.

~ Kum Sun Kim

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Mommy

Mommy, Mommy, Mommy.
WHAT!
Is there no end to this song!
They sing all day long.
From morning to noon—
Noon to night—
Night to dawn—
Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma.
WHAT!
That's O.K.
I think saying the word gives
Them sheer delight!
Ma, can I? Mommy, will you?
Mama, did ya?
MOTHER—MOMMY—MAMA—
MOM.
Is there no other name you can call!
Sure, there's Daddy, Auntie, Brother,
Sis, Cousin, Uncle.
Who did I miss, Oh yes,
There's Grandma and Grandpa
But my favorite is you!!!
MOM—MOM—MOM—
WHAT!!
I LOVE YOU.

~ Renee Glaze

A Day in the Life of a Typical Mother

I lie in my bed at 6:00 A.M.
Going through what I'm in store for in 30 minutes.
Six children.

Love is children,
Six is the number,
Havoc and chaos
Is usually the norm.

I go to sleep with six in the bed,
Jelly in their tummies, marker on their legs,
Soap in their hair
Can be a bear.

I get hugs and kisses,
So many I can't count,
So marker on walls, peanut butter in carpet,
Food under the bed
Won't jumble my head.

Never a private moment in the shower,
But six has power.

~ Sally White

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New World

I have learned not to worry
About love
But to honor its coming
With all my heart
To examine the dark mysteries
Of the blood
To know the rush of feelings
Swift and flowing as the water
The source appears to be
Within my one self
The new face I turn up
To you
No one else on earth
Has ever
Seen…
I love you

~ Christine Seman

Far Away...Beside Me

Sitting so close, your hands hold me so tight.
Though you look in my eyes, my face, out of sight.
So clearly, I speak sweet nothings in your ear.
You smile as if you are listening, but it's obvious you don't hear.

As the night turns to day, your grip loosens from around me.
Your priorities change and your plans don't include me.
A stranger you've become to me, sleeping in my bed.
Though I feel you lying next to me, I am alone in my head.

You don't hold me anymore, not a nice word to say.
You don't give me sweet compliments. You always complain.
You don't live for our love, you live only for money.
You don't smile anymore, to you nothing is funny.

So serious about things only God can control.
Not serious about us, I can't take any more.
I want you to love me, I beg and I plead.
I have a man who I love, that is far away...beside me.

~ Monique Ross

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My Grandson and Me

My grandson, Jacob, is eight years old. Each year during summer we spend a few days in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, in the Smoky Mountains. We always go on rides, play games, and swim in the pool. We also take walks and play in the river. We have a wonderful time together.

When we leave Pigeon Forge, we go to my sister's home in Spring City, Tennessee. They live on Watts Bar Lake. My brother-in-law takes Jacob and me out on the lake in their boat and pontoon to do some fishing. Jacob loves to fish. I remember the first fish Jacob caught. It was a huge carp. He was so excited. At the age of four, he could hardly pull the big fish up a hill on a stringer.

Jacob loves going to school and makes good grades. Since his beginning in school, he has had twenty-six tests and has a 100% average in reading.

After school on weekends, I pick him up and sometimes we go shopping for a toy or maybe go to the lake or to McDonald's where he can play. Jacob can spend hours at a toy store deciding on which toy to buy and Grandpa must stay very close by. If I take a couple steps from him, he has been known to say, "Grandpa, don't go running away." There is no danger of ever losing him in a store. He will stay very close to me.

If there is a perfect grandson, his name is Jacob Alexander Meyer, and he is loved very much by his grandpa, Art.

~ Art Massengil

My Teacher

When I walk in the room, so early in the morning
with discouragement on my face,
He looks at me, and it soothes my soul.
A productive day can now take place.

As I progress, making my way to success,
he gives me his words of encouragement.
Although I may start out stressed, I strive for the best,
determined to show him how much I appreciate him.

He has "wowed" me with his gentleness,
his ability to be patient and kind
In a world where people are desperate,
in a hurry to let life pass them by.

Such a wonderful creature, how can this be?
God sure has created a saint.
Although they say that no one is perfect,
he is perfect in so many ways.

I'm glad that I was blessed enough
to have walked across his path.
Although I'm happy to be moving on,
I wish that this could last.

There's no way for me to thank him,
no words could I say or write.
I'm so grateful to have met you.
Joe, I'll remember you for the rest of my life.

~ Monique G. Ross

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September

Oh how I hate to remember the
Month of September, for that was the month
I lost my sister.
I remember how we would go for
A swim in the pond. Now all day long
I sit and cry because she's gone.

Oh how I recall that dreadful day
When my sister lay in my arms and passed away.
Over and over I play it in my head
But mama says it was not my fault my sister was dead.

You can see what this month really means to me.
Mama says we don't need the sympathy
But somehow it's not the same
Because sometimes when
I sit by the pond I still hear my sister
Call my name.

~ Prescious Eutsey

Dear Mom

Dear Mom,
Life as a teen
Living on the streets
Trying to find a place to sleep.
Kicked out of your home
'Cause you think you should be on your own.
Now you can do what you want,
When you want,
But you wish to come back home.

~ Dawn Bradley

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Playing Tricks

When I was young, I liked to play tricks on my mom and sister. I was about six or seven years old, and we lived in a farm house on St Rt 669 between Saltillo and Crooksville. We had a pond across the road from where we lived.

I would go over and catch fish and frogs and take them home. I would wait until my mom ran her bath water. She liked to take bubble baths. I would put the frogs and fish in. Then I would run and hide. My mom would get in and start yelling at me. She always knew that I was the one that did it.

My sister was always afraid of spiders, daddy longlegs, and walking sticks. Every chance I got, I put them on her. She was also afraid of worms. I would put them in her hair and down her shirt. She would go running to Mom screaming and crying. I thought it was funny. In fact, just thinking about it now makes me laugh!

~ Carrie Miller

Being Proud

Since you were born into the world,
I HAVE BEEN PROUD OF . . . .

YOU came out
from my cut belly on the 3rd day of labor and 10 days overdue. Because of it, the doctor found cysts in my uterus; you saved your mother later surgery and a family crisis.

YOU started
to suck milk with your own mouth in the intensive care unit on the 3rd day. Everybody shed tears of joy in praise of your spirit.

YOU tolerated
the nurse drawing your blood again and again for the beginning of numerous tests.

YOU fed yourself
at 13 months with little tiny spoon in left hand (because preferred hand was connected to a bunch of tubes) instead of babying yourself.

YOU took your first step
at 27 months after 4 months of physical therapy.

YOU finger-spelled the words: nose, eye, and ear
to grandparents on your 3rd Thanksgiving Day.

YOU made a friend
from Preschool who missed you so much he cried; you made a bridge to new family friends.

YOU slapped the face
of an aide and a speech therapist, showing your anger to those who didn't understand you in kindergarten. You made people aware that you <u>could</u> communicate.

YOU loved being in gym class
even though you couldn't jump, throw, and move as your 1st grade classmates did. Running with your huge smile was nothing to discourage.

YOU verbalized, saying, "OK" and "Hayaku" (quick in

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Japanese) at 6 years, 10 months. You showed us the light in the dark, which is called ***Hope***.

Now you are 7 years old, I AM PROUD OF . . ..

YOU keep trying
to speak with your own voice after touch cueing even if it takes 3 seconds to vocalize the 1st syllable, and others make fun of you.

YOU can blow the fluffy cotton ball
on your palm without spitting.

YOU continue to learn
sign language to expand your knowledge, and you use your voice.

YOU enjoy exploring
use of augmentative device to communicate with people who don't understand your signing and verbal sounds.

YOU take 2nd grade spelling tests
by typing on the computer, showing your ability to those who are judgmental.

YOU are learning to maintain your sensory arousal level,
tolerating the Wilbarger's Brushing Protocol.

YOU can look
at the camera and say "Chi-e-eh" for picture taking.

YOU can change yourself
from wet/dirty pull-ups to new ones without my attendance.

YOU hold hands
with father and mother to stay close no matter what.

Pretty soon, I WILL BE PROUD OF . . .

YOU will go
to bathroom when needed, without reminding.

YOU will look at person
greeting you and respond without prompting.

YOU will blow bubbles
with your own mouth to enjoy your favorite play.
YOU will take care of yourself,
tolerating washing your face and hands with soap and water,
manipulating the toothbrush and spitting the water to rinse out your mouth,
wearing extra clothes such as sweater, socks and gloves when it is cold.
YOU will enjoy eating
all kinds of food, not only soba (Japanese noodles), Jell-O, chicken nuggets and fries, to explore textures, flavor, and temperature.
YOU will stay in your place
such as at school, theater, or a restaurant without running away.
YOU will take a walk
outside and remember to come home all by yourself.
YOU will tell me
how you feel, when you are sick, in pain, sad, excited, happy . . . .
YOU will tell me,
without my cue question, what happened while you were away from me.

I AM ALWAYS PROUD OF YOU! You are my child without question!
Your presence gives me power and strength to
-face challenges I never thought possible,
-proceed to reach the dream which some call a miracle,
-go against the "reality" of your special needs.

Thanks to my daughter, Sarah

~ Fumiko Adair

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The Butterfly

In the spring it is born out of the dead and decayed. All dripping wet out of froth and foam. Lying limp as if it had lived through a raging storm. Vaguely remembering it had had another form. As the sun dried out its velvety wings, the burdens of its old weight were simply gone. It doesn't quite yet understand what it's supposed to do. All it can think of is a memory of the hardness of the ground and damp wetness as it crawled around. What are these memories that come in clear but seem so strange, yet all so real? Something is different, but what?

"My legs have changed, and some are gone!" "How am I to crawl and feel the earth shake?" "What are these things trying to stick up in the air?" "Why did I sleep so long?"

Then God heard the Butterfly's distress, so he sent an Angel to guide it through the steps. The Angel spoke through the Heavenly Realms. At first the Butterfly did not hear, too concerned about her distress. Finally the soft melody the Angel sang gave peace and comfort to the Butterfly, and all its fears fled. The message was coming in so loud and clear.

The Angel sang of long ago, after man had fallen from grace. How God had cried when he wiped out the human race. He had cried so hard it flooded the world. There was only one man left who could hear God's words. Noah was able to save his family and other creatures across the lands, with God's loving hands. He then gave Noah a sign from above--a rainbow with a promise to never again flood the land.

Every creature and every living thing was given a special assignment, as God knew the flood didn't really wipe away sin. You, my dear one, were put here so you could be seen everyday as a reminder that life never ends. You are one of the miracles most people refuse to see. The caterpillar you once were represents man in his sin, your cocoon represents their graves, your metamorphosis represents that life never

ends, but changes. But so few humans see this, this beautiful gift for all it represents. So go and tell the Good News! Spread yourself around the town, so someone may be willing to see that you are here to represent God, and let them all know life is not ever over. It just changes, and you are the proof that Life Goes On.

So next time you see a Butterfly flutter, from flower to flower, it's God's message we do not die, we just leave the flesh behind and then our real life begins. For Virginia (Mom), I love you, Laura Lee Green-Kulcak

The story behind "The Butterfly"…

I wrote this story for a dear and treasured friend. I wrote this for her because she had breast cancer. She also had to face death as treatments were too few too late.

She was like a second mom to me and living so far from my own family, it was nice to have such a friend as her. Her name was Virginia Blevens. She took my husband and me in like we were family when we moved to Ohio in 1994. She lived just across the street, and it didn't take long for us to become fast friends. We always called her Mom as she wished.

I have had a hard time in dealing with her loss. It's as though a huge piece of my heart is missing. I felt this way months prior to her death. I didn't know how to talk to her or what to say. I was used to saying, "Everything will work out fine" or "It will be okay." But this time I knew she was really going to die. At a time when I knew she needed me most, no words would come out.

The last time I saw her, we enjoyed a nice lunch together, and she had on a shirt with butterflies all over it. I told her how nice she looked in it. When I left that day, it was to be the last time I would ever see her alive. When I got home from our visit, I sat down and cried. It was so hard to see her laid up in bed. I kept thinking she should be outside

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sitting on her porch enjoying the flowers she loved so much. It was spring and everything was starting to bloom, and I kept thinking how unfair it was for her, her family, and her friends.

Then a thought came to my mind, and I couldn't get the image of the butterflies on her shirt to disappear. I grabbed a pen as thoughts were pushing around in my mind faster than I could write them out. It started out to be a poem, then before I knew it I had a story.

In a crazed and hurried way, I went up to my computer, started to type, and put a rainbow colored effect in the background. I couldn't find a frame, so I went to a nearby store and got one. I also got some pretty spring colored silk flowers.

When I got home, I put the story in the frame and then I hot-glued an arrangement of flowers on the frame and even added a couple of fake butterflies. It had to be just right. It took me all evening to get this accomplished, but time was a very important matter.

The following day, my husband delivered it to Virginia's family. At this point the family had decided not to have visitors as it tired Virginia, and we respected their wishes.

She was able to enjoy the last gift I gave to her. A gift from my heart to hers. I knew she wouldn't be able to see the spring flowers, so I brought them to her. Her family told me that she had that frame with the flowers and The Butterfly story at her bedside for the remainder of her time here on earth. She also had someone read it to her at least once a day. The family said she cherished it. I just hope it gave her comfort and helped her with her fear and dying. I do know that it had helped me, and I believe it was divinely inspired.

Virginia would want me to share this, in hopes it would help someone else come to terms with death or to help the ones left behind. In her memory I am passing this on.

~ Laura Lee Green-Kuleak

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Long Ago and Far Away

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A Tennessee Childhood

I was born and raised in the mountains in Tennessee. The Tennessee mountains are very beautiful, and Tennessee is a beautiful state. I love to go back to my home state and visit often.

I began my formal education at the age of six. During my first year I successfully completed three grade levels: primer, first, and second grades. The following year I completed two additionai grade levels: third and fourth grades. Unfortunately, the small school that I attended was forced to close and the children were bussed to the valley. But my father decided that he would not allow his children to be bussed to the valley, and so my education was put on hold while I was forced to help with the chores around the farm.

At the age of sixteen I began to attend school once again. I started in the fifth grade and was promoted to the sixth grade. After completing one month of sixth grade classes, I was forced once again to leave school and work on the family farm.

There was a lot to do on our farm because we produced all of our own food. We grew all of our own vegetables. We grew wheat and corn and processed them to make our own bread. We raised chickens for eggs and poultry, hogs for meat, and cows for milk.

My mother, father, two younger sisters, and I lived with my grandparents. My mother was epileptic and, because of her frequent seizures, needed help raising the children.

My mother and grandmother both passed away when I was around eight years of age. My two sisters and I were left for my father and grandfather to care for. Because I was the oldest, I was forced to take on the responsibility of caring for my two younger sisters. I cooked, cleaned, laundered the clothes, and completed any other household chores that were needed.

As a young teen while doing my chores, feeding the animals, and milking the cows, I would dream of living in a

room in the barn with a clean floor, wallpapered walls, and a bed with a bedspread. I wanted to be on my own with no one to care for but myself.

At nineteen I had no goals in life but to somehow find a way to get on my own. Then a friend of mine asked me to come to Ohio with him for a visit with family. I decided to stay in Ohio and find a job. This job was the thrill of my life. I was finally on my own.

I was laid off work on January 19, 1959, and went to work at Totes, Inc. in May of that year; I worked at this job until October 1966. I then found a better job with the Borden Chemical Company in Cincinnati, Ohio. I worked many different jobs at Borden.

I could have been a supervisor, but due to the lack of education and confidence, I didn't accept that job offer. Upon leaving for retirement at age sixty-two, I was a lead person and ran my department on second shift. I was able to handle people well, and the company was happy with my performance. I did my job well while at Borden Inc. I had one new home built, later sold that home and bought another new brick home on one acre of ground. I still live in this home today.

I was determined to do the best I could in life even if I didn't have a good education. At the age of sixty-four, I decided to start going to school and get a G.E.D. diploma. I am presently working hard to achieve this goal. Also, I am hoping to buy a computer soon and learn how to operate the computer.

Sometimes I still think about my childhood days, and, at times, returning to the beautiful mountains in the state of Tennessee where I was born and raised, but I'm not sure that will ever happen. The state of Ohio has been good to me in many wonderful ways. I will continue to work to achieve all of my goals.

– Art Massengill

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Boyhood Days

On the banks of the Ohio
Where I spent my boyhood days,
A-swimming and a-fishing and
Riding the steamboat waves.

As I look back on those days
And the fun that we had then,
I know we were just happy boys
Not thinking how soon it would end.

As the years went by,
We all went our ways.
I wonder if my buddies
Ever think about those days

When we were just youngsters,
Not a care to crowd our minds,
Just having fun together and
Having a grand old time.

I left my boyhood home
Many years ago,
And sometimes I really miss
The places that I loved so.

~ Earl Willford

The Night a P. T. Boat Prowled Lake Erie

There are many stories that are adrift and unsolved on Lake Erie. A few of them are tall tales, and I'm afraid I would be laughed off the lake even to mention them. Those can be ignored, but some can't.

Not long ago, I slipped down to the library on a mission to the past. As I sifted through the archives of old newspaper clippings looking for a local maritime drama, my eyes locked onto an interesting clipping from the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* dated October 3, 1945. The headline-grabbing story was "War boat sunk off Whiskey Island." As I read the first accounts, it pushed my pulse rate into the red zone and cast a spell on my adrenaline. Most lake stories are worn with time, but what unfolded was one of the lake's more unusual untold episodes. This story has been hibernating somewhere between V.J. Day and Monica. Trying to recall the details through the doorway of my memory is somewhat like looking in the wrong end of a pair of binoculars. With the help of the local library, I will now embark on a voyage back to the fall of 1945.

The sunken man-of-war was an icon of WWII in the Pacific. An eighty-foot "Patrol Torpedo Boat," a.k.a. P.T. Boat, lay on the bottom of the lake about one-quarter mile north of Whiskey Island. Although not visible by land, its dark shadow had been spotted by a pilot departing on a morning flight from Burke Lakefront Airport. The only information available at press time was that the Cleveland Coast Guard was investigating.

Oct. 4, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition… "When the U.S. Navy was contacted, they gave no explanation as to the odd occurrence." Or, was it an effort to conceal information? It wasn't long before they had placed the area under tight security.

Oct. 5, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition… "Salvage operations are now under way by the U.S. Navy." The *Plain Dealer* ran daily articles describing the progress and

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trying to unravel the incident. The news swept across the city as fast as a spring storm crossing the lake.

Oct. 6, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition… "Each day bewildered curiosity seekers gathered at the shoreline." It was as if someone had found the master key to unlock each spectator's imagination. A flood of "ifs" came up with the sun each morning, as excitement ran high on pure speculation. The best theories were hotter than "Betty Grable." The *Plain Dealer* followed up on every clue that seemed logical, and even the illogical ones that seemed interesting, but their efforts to learn the truth were inconclusive.

Oct. 7, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition… "The Navy salvage crew brought a magnificent war machine to the surface." Now wider implications took shape. It was no accident that the P. T. boat was on the bottom. It had been scuttled. This solved the questions of the crew's whereabouts.

Although unverified, the belief was that the boat had been used to run some illegal cargo. Perhaps an attempt had been made to dispose of the evidence by sending the P.T. boat to the deep solace of the lake bottom, but the P.T. took a dive sooner than anticipated before reaching deep water.

Oct. 8, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition… "The P.T. boat was far from being a decrepit old war relic." Powered by three 1350 h.p. Packard gas engines, it was over the edge in the speeds it could obtain at maximum power. Many of the Navy's captains returning from the war stated that riding on a P.T. boat at full force was like holding onto a drunk on ice.

No police or Coast Guard boats on the lake could even come close to the mystic speeds of the P.T. This warrior was in pristine condition, although all of its lights had been removed, and the entire boat had been painted with flat black paint. This gave further credence to the notion that the boat had become a pawn in a high stakes crime.

Oct. 10, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition… "Lieutenant Commander Bruce Campbell, a spokesperson for the Navy's Classified Operational Section in Washington.

D.C., stated the Navy's recorded copy of the P.T.'s mission log shed light on its military career. The Electric Boat Co. of Bayonne, N. J., built Hull Number 621 which had been commissioned in June, 1943. Hull 621 had achieved distinction in war patrols with the Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron of the Pacific Fleet." Later, it was returned to the U.S. to be retained for instructional purpose at the Great Lakes Training Center near Chicago. When the Navy checked with the G.L.T.C., they listed the P.T. as "Whereabouts unknown." Could the P.T. have fallen victim to a world of stolen possessions and human ambitions? Found in the boat was an oilskin chart case containing several water soaked charts of the Detroit River. Both the Cleveland Coast Guard and the Cleveland police could only conclude that whatever the high stakes crime had been, it had been carried out by a select group of non-amateurs, who left no margin for errors.

Oct. 25, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition... "The Cleveland police believe their investigation has unlocked the puzzle of the P.T. 621." Prior to the early morning discovery, as the rest of the lake slumbered, a major art theft had taken place in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. It occurred at the Art Institute of Windsor located on Victoria Street less than a block from the Detroit River. The Curator of the Institute said several pieces of Renaissance art had been taken during the night with the help of some sophisticated equipment. The art objects were listed as priceless. The Curator indicated clever art pirates looted the paintings from a heavily secured vault. The rare paintings were awaiting shipment back to London, England. In 1940, the paintings had been sent to Canada for safe keeping to avoid possible damage during the air raid blitz on London by the German Luftwaffe. Now owned by a socially prominent London family, the art at one time had been owned by the Duke of Kensington.

There was no doubt that the heist had been carried out by master thieves with an ingenious plan for using the fastest means of maritime travel. Even in the '40s the art world had unscrupulous buyers willing to pay staggering sums

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of money to secure priceless treasures for their private sanctuaries. The last mention of the story appeared in the *Plain Dealer* that December. There were no leads on any of the art thieves or any trace of the art cache.

P.T. 621 was returned to the Great Lakes Training Center. With the war finally over and Christmas just days away, the P.T. saga was quickly forgotten. The story had long ago slipped from the headlines. By far it was not the biggest event of 1945, but the mixture of fact and tale fueled people's imaginations. Long locked in time, the old clippings had claimed a lair deep in the chambers of the Port Clinton library. Their silence is still elusive, but possibly the incident may be remembered by a few people in Cleveland.

I had gone in search of a story and accidentally stumbled into a passageway that led to a refuge of another unsolved lake mystery that had vanished with time. I now ask myself, are the winds of the past still searching for the truth of the occurrence? Or have I only disturbed the silence of mere shadows?

~ Philip H. Edwards

Supreme Court of India

The Supreme Court of India is the highest court of justice in our country. Situated in New Delhi, it consists of a Chief Justice and not more than 25 other judges. The Chief Justice and judges are appointed by the President of India. In the appointment of the Chief Justice, the President consults judges of the Supreme Court and High Court, but in the case of appointment of other judges, he always consults the Chief Justice. The judges hold office until the age of 65 years. Ad hoc judges may also be appointed by the Chief Justice for such period as necessary.

To be a judge of the Supreme Court, one must be a citizen of India who has been (a) a Judge of High Court for at least five years, (b) an advocate of a High Court for at least ten years, or (c) a distinguished jurist in the opinion of the President.

Broadly, there are three types of functions of the Supreme Court of India:

Original jurisdiction: Only the Supreme Court has the power to decide any dispute between the Government of India and one or more states, or a dispute between two or more states.

Appellate Jurisdiction: The Supreme Court decides cases or judgments given by a High Court in the territory of India, whether civil or criminal, if an appeal is made to it in this regard.

Advisory functions: The Supreme Court also has certain advisory functions. If at any time a question of public interest arises upon which the President wants to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court, he can refer the question to the Court. The Court, after giving due consideration, may report to the President its opinion thereof. Even disputes regarding interpretation of treaties, agreements, etc., can be referred to the Supreme Court by the President.

The Supreme Court has the power to punish for contempt of court. It also has the power to review its own

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judgments and orders. It hears disputes regarding the election of the President or Vice-President. It orders the enforcement of fundamental rights if they are violated.

The Supreme Court is rightly called the Guardian of our Constitution and the Protector of Liberties of the people.

~ Mahammed Kutubuddin

My Mountains

My name is Mildred, but everybody knows me as Milita (mee-lee-tuh). I'm from Otavalo City in the Province of Imbabura in Ecuador, a country in northwestern South America. Ecuador has the Coast, where it's hot and humid; the Sierra, with the beautiful mountains of the Andes, where the climate is warm and cold similar to spring and fall here in Ohio; the Orient, with the jungle and the rainforest; and finally, the Galapagos Islands, with the most unique species in the world.

I grew up in Otavalo City, surrounded by the mountains. The closest to Otavalo is Imbabura Mountain, only 10 minutes from the city. Otavalo is one of the biggest tourist cities of Ecuador, a city rich in handcrafts and folklore. In downtown Otavalo is a statue of the King of the Incas, the brave Ruminahui. Like any city, Otavalo has things for sale every day, but Saturday is a special big sale day with three full markets: one full market of food, another with handcrafted goods, and another with clothes. There's always something for everyone. People like to negotiate, and you can find good bargains.

It's so beautiful to see the high mountains, with the snow on the top, looking down through the clouds to the cities and their people. The mountains are part of us, and we are part of them. I call Imbabura "my mountain." Big, high, and brave, with the shape of a heart, stands the beautiful Imbabura. On the skirt of the mountain are located many towns and cities, as well as a big lake, called San Pablo. When I was a little girl, someone told me a story about the Imbabura Mountain, the Lake San Pablo, and the Lechero, which is the oldest tree in Imbabura. The story goes like this:

> *Once there was a big, rich farmer who owned a most beautiful mansion and had parties every weekend. One day a homeless person stopped at the front door of*

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the mansion, asking for something to eat. The owner and his wife refused to help him and treated him unkindly. The homeless person asked for help three times, and the last time the owner and his family treated the homeless person worse than before, so the homeless person told the owner that one day he would die and have to leave all his possessions. As the homeless person left the farm, water began flooding the mansion. The only ones to escape were the owner and his wife, and they ran in different directions. Suddenly their appearance began to change—she became the mountain, and he became the Lechero. He tried to grab her, and that is why the mountain has the shape of a heart. The Imbabura and the Lechero are looking down upon the lake, which was once a big, rich mansion. People say that, when it's a dark night without moon or stars, they can still hear the loud cry of the ones who died on the lake, as well as the rhythmic wind from the Imbabura Mountain to the Lechero tree.

The Zone of Intag is a beautiful place! I visited Intag many times in the past. My father used to bring my mom, my five brothers and me to the hot pools, the springs coming from the mountains. Behind the hot pools is a big river, clean as a crystal, so that I could count the stones through the water. My father always said that it's good to cool down from the springs to the river, and we did just as my father said. The trips to Intag were a little scary, because the road was only wide enough for one car, and the curves were very close. If a car came in the opposite direction, someone had to go back until they found enough room to pass. It's amazing to be on the top

of the mountain and look down to the tiny little houses of the town.

One of my best memories is when I was 11 years old. After attending girls' school for ten months, it was time for vacation. August and September were the months to enjoy. My Aunt Rebeca was director of the school in Garcia Moreno, which is located deep inside the mountains of Intag. Aunt Rebecca invited me to spend a month of my vacation with her in Garcia Moreno, so we traveled by bus from Otavalo for 3 or 4 hours until the road ended. Then there were horses waiting for us. We spent the next 8 hours on the horses, up and down the hills, passing one and another mountain, over and over, until finally we arrived in Garcia Moreno. The street was just dust. There were no cars, no airplanes, no electricity, no showers, and I thought, "Oh, no! What a vacation!" I guess I was disappointed.

A few days later, I had made new friends, and I began falling in love with this place. Life in Garcia Moreno was so simple, so quiet, and the only melody I could hear at night was from the bugs and frogs. In Garcia Moreno everybody knows everybody. The people were friendly, especially youth and children, and many of them are still my friends. The majority of the houses in Garcia Moreno are constructed with wood. All the food was pure. It was there that I drank, for the first time, fresh milk, warm and bubbly, straight from the cow. The cheese was the most delicious that I had ever eaten. From the tree to my hands were fresh fruits such as papayas, bananas, lemons, and oranges. Also there was watermelon, yucca, and more.

Twenty years have passed, and everything has changed. Now the bus goes all the way to Garcia Moreno, and there are stores, cars, motels, and new people.

I realize how important the mountains are to me, since I have not seen them in so long. When I lived in Ecuador, I never thought too much of the mountains—probably I expected to see them always—but now I'm here in Ohio. We don't have high mountains, and I find myself

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missing my mountains in Ecuador. If I ever go back to live in Ecuador I will probably live in Intag, because I love the life there, as well as the simplicity, the peace, and the people.

~ Milita Stringer

Family Memories

When Grandma moved to her favorite house in Burley, Idaho, a house she had always wanted to live in, it was like one of her very last wishes coming true. Her sister had lived in this very same house. Driving by, you would think it was a pink apartment house with two front doors. Grandma always talked about how she loved visiting her sister Ella there. It was a nice house, not big, and all one level, which I'm sure was a plus.

Grandma was 82, but she got along pretty good for her age. Her temperament was that of a younger person. She was high-spirited, noble, determined and strong. I always looked up to her for those qualities. I wish I had half her character and spirit.

I lived with her so I could help out by taking her to doctors and driving her wherever she needed to go. She dressed up for these occasions, with her hair done and a scarf on it to protect it from the Idaho winds. I helped her prepare meals, and in return she taught me the fine art of quilting, and the fine art of how to be a lady.

One day I'll never forget was when Uncle Lee and I saw this plant out front in a small flowerbed, right by one of the front doors. Well, we both knew very well what this plant was, but Grandma would have none of our back talking! She was mad because Uncle Lee wanted to pull out her "tomato plant." She said we needed to leave it alone! I don't recall how long Uncle Lee and Grandma went round and round about this, but it was quite a while. I tried to put my two cents worth in, but Grandma had her mind set--it was a tomato plant. She told us to leave her tomato plant alone, and she went inside, slamming the door. As far as she was concerned, the subject was closed. It didn't matter that we told her it was an illegal plant. Yep, it was a hemp plant! To her, it was a tomato plant. To us, it was TROUBLE!

Uncle Lee and I didn't know quite what to do. We both kind of laughed. Neither one of us could imagine her

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facing a troop of policemen, let alone an 82-year-old woman getting arrested for growing marijuana. I didn't want to get blamed for it either, as I was 19. Could you explain this to an officer of law, that your great-grandmother wanted it left there? Could you explain that it was there when we moved into the house? Even worse, could you insist to a police officer "It's just a tomato plant"? Yeah, right! They would have locked us all up and thrown away the key.

I do know that the plant mysteriously disappeared. She was pretty upset about it. Whoever took care of the problem, I'm glad they did!

On the day she passed on, I was one of the last people she thought of as she fell asleep, never to wake up again. At that time, I had moved and was visiting. Nothing spectacular happened that day. It was just normal. She sat and talked to me as I baked several sheets of cookies. I'll never forget the strange look in her eyes as we said good-bye. I gave her a hug, and she gave me a kiss on the forehead, like she had done when I was a little girl. It was like she knew something. She said, "You have the gift. Guard it well." I didn't have any idea what she meant, but she had said this to me once before, when I was nine. The only explanation she gave me was that it ran in the family, that mostly women knew about it, and that I would know when I got older. It would be years later before I realized the extent of her message, although I got a hint of it that same night.

Later that evening, Uncle Lee took her to Rupert, Idaho, to see a fireworks display. At the same time, I was watching TV with my sister and brother-in-law. I remember blurting out to them, "Grandma's gone." They thought I was acting strange, and I couldn't believe I had said it, let alone understand where it had come from. Within a half hour, we got a message that there was an ambulance at Great Grandma Day's. We all ran for the car. We pulled up in time to see the ambulance going down the road and Uncle Lee, standing there.

No words needed to be said. We knew she was gone. We sat on the sidewalk. I looked at where that silly plant was that Grandma called her tomato plant. She had replaced the missing hemp plant with a real tomato plant! I felt an overwhelming urge to laugh and cry, and I did both at the same time. Her last gift to me was laughter and tears, to treasure forever.

~ Laura Lee Green-Kulcak

A Terrible Day in My Life

On Sunday, in the summer of 1985, my teacher took all the pupils in my class to the Saigon Zoological Garden in Vietnam. We were the earliest visitors there. While we were walking slowly across a small wooden bridge and looking down at the goldfish underwater, we heard a very strange sound behind us. How horrible it was! A big tiger was running toward us. Nobody could say a word. We ran as fast as our legs would carry us to escape the tiger. After running for a minute, the distance between the tiger and us seemed shorter and shorter. Because I was so afraid, I stumbled over a stone and fell down. I couldn't stand up to continue running away; I just remained lying on the ground.

Less than a minute later, the tiger was standing next to me. I closed my eyes and held my breath. I heard the roar of the tiger. I thought that the tiger would end my life. About thirty seconds went by, but the tiger did nothing to me. Then he began licking my face, my hand. It was a dreadful sensation. My body was wet with sweat. Then, I knew nothing about what was happening to me. I fainted.

I didn't know how many minutes passed by, but I knew that I was still alive. The tiger had stopped licking me. When I collected my wits, I half opened my eyes and I didn't see the tiger. My teacher helped me stand up. I still wondered why the tiger spared me. When my teacher gathered us all together again, she explained that the tiger had broken free from his cage because of the animal keeper's carelessness. After feeding the tiger, he had forgotten to lock the cage. I also learned that the tiger didn't devour me because he had forgotten his natural ability and instinct. The zoo had cooped him up in his cage for fifteen years, and he had no chance to grab other animals as he used to in the jungle.

When I came home and told my mother what happened to me in the zoo, she was very happy because I was safe. The memory of my frightening experience haunts me whenever I think of wild animals. I always thank God for saving my life.

~ Thuy Nguyen

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A Love Letter

I was born and grew up on the left bank of the Volga River. Anyone who has experienced the joy of a trip down the river will never forget it. I'm remembering one summer vacation with my young, at that time, parents. It was my first big step from home outside in an unknown world. I fell in love with the beauty of the river.

July-Afternoon-Hot Air-Silence. And you're watching the endless blue sky from the top of a ship.

There were many old churches on the right bank of the river. With their white bodies and gold shining crosses, they were lighthouses in the daytime.

I was walking down the full ship's length to keep observing any churches. When one was gone, I ran to the nose of the ship to meet the next church. Mama said the buildings were places to pray to a God.

Thirty years later, I took another trip up the river. It wasn't a happy time for me. I was destroyed by a divorce, unloved, without a house and a job. I wasn't ready for a new start. But in my losses I found a refreshing happiness. There were churches on the right bank of the river!

I bought a big smoked fish, a big round loaf of rye bread, and a bottle of wine. I ate it all! It was so good.

Now I'm saying my prayers, but not regularly. But I want to believe the river still streams, and in July the ships still make the trip.

~ Tatyana O'Neill

The Street Beggars

Thousands of people in many countries live by begging. For centuries in Vietnam, begging for food and money has been a career for old men and women who aren't able to work. Some of them are disabled: blind, lame or without hands and even orphans. They are really poor and homeless. We don't have welfare in Vietnam, and they don't get any help from the government. Nobody takes care of them.

The big cities have some nursing homes and orphanages, but the beggars don't want to live in there. Anyway they don't like to leave their hometown and, furthermore, they like the freedom of living outside. They don't have any choice beyond begging to make a living.

How is the life of the beggars? Every morning when the sun rises, the beggars leave from their dwelling place with a bamboo cane, a begging bowl, and on the shoulder carrying a begging bag. You may see them appear in every town at every corner, in the streets, the bazaars, the bus stations, the gas stations, the post offices, the train stations, the restaurants, the super-markets and even at the pagodas on Buddhist holidays. They beg for food and money from passers-by. Some beggars die of sickness and starvation. Their lives are really pitiful.

Nowadays, there are more beggars and they have many more ways to beg. You may see a child lead a blind man or a woman lead a man without a leg, lost in the Vietnam war. They carry a micro, a guitar, and a battery with them. The child or the woman will sing a song, and the man will play the guitar. After that they beg for some food or some change from the passers-by.

But many men are strong or able men, who could work as well as anyone else. They are lazy men, alcoholics, drug-users, and gamblers. To rouse the charity of others, they pretend to be sick, fake an injury on their arm or their leg and cover it with a full bandage.

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Many children don't have the opportunity to go to school. They have to beg all day in the streets. After the begging day the children must bring all the money to their parents who stayed home drinking and gambling. If the children who beg don't have enough money for the parents, they may beat the children like slaves. The children are victims of child abuse.

According to newspaper reporters, in the big cities many babies are "for rent" for begging. In the morning the beggars walk to the corner or the intersection such as an appointment place and receive a baby. The babies have taken some sleeping pills before the beggars hold them, so they won't disturb the beggars. After the day of begging they return the babies to their parents, then they share the money.

Most of the beggars sleep under bridges, in the parks, on the pavements, and under the roof of buildings.

Can you believe that? A group of people in a small village found out it is easier to live upon the charity of other people instead of looking for a job and working hard for a living. They come to the big cities and make a good living by begging. They save their money. After a few years they have enough money and come back to their hometown and build a house.

Some beggars are very rude; they try to force the passers-by to give them money. The beggars curse at the passers-by if they don't give them some change.

In The United States of America, we sometimes see the beggars at the gas stations, in the corners of the town, or at the traffic lights with the board sign "homeless, hungry, will work, …." I don't think they are as poor as the beggars in other countries. I think they are alcoholics, drug-users, gamblers or they have personal problems.

What do you think about the street beggars?

~ Quang Minh Cao

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Living Things

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Autumn
Dismal, bare
Falling, denuding, fading
Chill, quietness, warmth, busyness
Budding, blooming, coloring
Bright, luxuriant
Spring

~ Anh Phuong Nguyen

Ponies

Next to the other show horses
the little pony seemed like a toy,
a toy of steel with a soul
of gold upon her saddle,
as the little girl, with glasses
jumped over fences, cantered
or moved to a trot
as upon the most gracious champion
in a rhythmic motion
of one single body and soul.

The pony's white and gray colors
matched the girl's freckles and blouse
and the two gold and silver heads
arched together to reach
the other side of a rainbow
of clean sunshine and smiles
that were showing only
for the two of them
in every jump.

The little pony at times,
for his own self or that of the little girl,
refused to jump here or trot there
and then both heads bowed low
raising their eyes from between
red faces with tears to show
frustration, love, or both.
The mutual bond was so tight
one soul alone held them together.

The bond was one day brutally broken.
An accident pinned the pony
to the ground, broke her spine
and two bodies separated

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while one soul only
held the pain.

The little girl watched
her soul break in two,
unaware that her pain
provided the soul
to carry the pony to heaven
where she could trot
freely over the meadows with no falls
and no jumps she could refuse.

She had now become immortal
with the soul made for her
by the little girl
who gave her pony, in love,
her eternal pain.

The soul of a pony
is the love
of a little girl.

~ Cynthia Harrison

Morning

As the sun came up
over the ice-covered lake,
the pink and blue hues
my eyes gave a second take.

The air felt a chill
which wakes up the skin.
It also starts the mind
thinking: let the new day begin.

A prayer softly spoken to go
up to the sky.
Faith is knowing the
answers will multiply.

The beautiful sun is now up,
another day to begin.
More adventure awaits
Another goal to win.

~ Marjie Mustard

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Winter
Cold, wet
Raining, sleeting, snowing
Poinsettias, evergreens, roses, tulips
Fishing, boating, swimming
Warm, sunny
Summer

~ Art Massengill

Untouched Island

Calm, clear, quiet, and unruffled.
Small sounds of water sprinkling
Down rocks, or falling off leaves
Hitting puddles
Birds flying in the crisp air of
The ocean.
Waves bouncing off the white
Sand that goes back into
Endless times.
The way the wind blows through
The palm trees and through
Flowers which give a fragrance
That is unforgettable.
The sound of a waterfall
Dropping into clear,
Blue water.
Animals that can
Enjoy a habitat without loss.
The beauty that this
Island has is untouched!

– Heather Tilley

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Butterfly
Colorful, busy
Flying, sucking, producing
Always looking for flowers
Bee

~ Anh Phuong Nguyen

Winter's Fun

The air is cold, the sky is gray
The ground is white with snow.
The boys and girls are out at play
With their sleds in tow.

They're bundled up to keep them warm
From their heads to toes.
Huffing, puffing, up the hill
To the top they go.

Down the hill away we go
Runners gliding through the snow.
Racing down at break neck speed
Wind in faces, "Faster," they plead.

Humpity, bumpity, downward they go
As they hit bottom, they're tossed into the snow.
Rolling and laughing as they come to a stop
Up again, up again! Back to the top.

~ Carol Rudder

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Our Unusual Household and Its Inhabitants

My family and I are not a usual family. We love animals, but not just ordinary animals. We have exotic animals that people no longer want and therefore, give to us.

Rocky, our iguana, is about 2 ½ years old. He's a beautiful bright green and tan-to-brown, thick striped. He was abused by his previous owner. Curt, my boyfriend, saw him in a pet store, but no one wanted him, so Curt bought him for my birthday. We had to do a lot of training and earn Rocky's trust. After he was healed physically, we were able to get him used to us to where we could pet and hold him. Now he roams the house, free and happy.

He likes to eat green, leafy vegetables and cat food, although iguanas don't usually eat cat food.

Spike is a Cayman, which is an aggressive alligator. This is Curt's pet. We got him from a friend's brother. Spike was no longer wanted, for whatever reason. He likes to eat live prey, like medium-sized rats. He is about 3 ½ to 4 feet long and weighs about 20-30 pounds. I, myself, do not handle Spike unless he has his muzzle on.

One of our other pets is a bird, a cockatiel named Smoky. We got him from a man who had to go on a permanent vacation. Smoky is a beautiful smoke grey and about seven years old. He usually flies around the living room and loves to land on your shoulder. If you're eating, watch out, here comes Smoky. He loves to eat. Most birds only eat seed and bread, but not Smoky. He will eat anything, like steak, mashed potatoes, and whatever we have for dinner. He'll sit up on his cage, make a beautiful spread of his wings, and say, "Pretty, pretty bird." Smoky will give you kisses, play with your hair, and he loves earrings. But you'd better watch out if you're a guy – he pulls your facial hair.

We recently lost our boa constrictor named Sly. We fed him a small mouse and he got blood poisoning from it.

We also have not-so-exotic animals – our fish and cats. Our fish don't have names. Our cats' names are Whitey

and Hash. Bet you can't guess why we call them that. Whitey is a pure white cat. He was our very first animal. We saw an ad in the newspaper for a little lost kitten who had wandered to an old lady's house, but she didn't want him. Hash is a pure black kitten we found outside starving. Hash is our unusual cat because he has no tail.

I know most people think we're crazy for having all these animals, but it really shows our children about love, responsibility, and to be unafraid of different kinds of animals.

~ Angela Murphy

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The Little Lame Donkey

Once there was a little lame donkey. He lived by himself because no one wanted him. He was lame in one leg, but this didn't bother the little donkey at all. He was always thankful to have three good legs. His fourth leg was weak and he couldn't put much weight on it.

It seemed nobody wanted a lame donkey, so he decided to live by himself. He had every right to be bitter and sad, but he was always happy.

Each morning he awakened with a happy face. Come rain or shine, he would get up and find himself some grain or grass to eat. But before he ate he always bowed his head and gave thanks to God for giving him food and strength to take care of himself.

The little donkey would go for long, slow walks every day. At the beginning, his walks were slow and short. But with a lot of effort and a strong mind he became able to walk all the way to town and back home.

He would say God gave me three good legs for walking and a good strong mind for thinking, so I have no time to feel sorry for myself. I can find a dry place to live and gather in all my food for winter. With God's beauty all around me, what more would I need?

One day the snow had been falling all morning, and in the afternoon the little lame donkey went for his walk. He was walking slowly, admiring the falling snow, and thinking this was one of the most special times of the year. It was Christmas Eve!

Then the little donkey saw something moving in the snow. He didn't get too close at first. He saw it was an old man who couldn't get up by himself. The old man was freezing and his body was shaking. He opened his eyes and looked at the little lame donkey as if to say, "Help me please." The little donkey used his clear mind for thinking. He knew the old man needed to be warm before he could move him.

The little donkey lay down beside the old man to get him warm with the heat from his body. He then licked the old man's hands and face to get the circulation going.

Soon the old man started moving around. He took his neck scarf and tied one end to one of the little donkey's good legs and the other end to the blanket he was lying on. The little lame donkey pulled the old man very slowly until he got to the little donkey's house. There he found enough blankets to cover the old man so he would be warm.

The sun began to shine, and the snow started melting. The little donkey had never seen the sun shine so pretty and warm on Christmas Eve. The old man took cookies, candy, and fruit from his coat pockets to give to the little donkey.

It was a mystery to the little donkey how the old man had fresh fruit in December, but he asked no questions. He just bowed his head, thanked God, and wished the old man a Merry Christmas.

~ Etta Lorene Bailey

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Lagniappe

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High Pressure Performance

High pressure performance
We've got what you need.
Take it to the limit
Explosive fire power.

Put up or shut up.
This is the thrill ride.
Hit a Coor's Light.
Explosive firepower.

This is the power tour
For all champions.
Don't be a chicken.
Explosive firepower.

Instant power, Super Sport.
You got it--Street legal
Pit stop, D.U.I.,
Detonation, body parts,
Explosive firepower!

~ Jeff Bell

The Cellar

Going down to the cellar to do laundry is a frightening experience for me. It's almost like going into a haunted house all alone. I open the spine-shivering, squeaky door and take my hesitating first step. I firmly grip onto the rail as I make my way down the steep and creaky stairwell. I see strange shadows on the walls from the dangling dim light at the bottom. The dust is so thick you can taste it, and there is a strong smell of musty mildew from the rotted waterlogged brick walls. Cobwebs and spider webs dangle lightly from the ceiling and from all of the corners. You can hear pipes rattling above you as well as creaks from the house settling. As I creep across to the other side, to the washer, I can feel the debris on the bottom of my feet from the crumbled, corroded concrete all over the ground. I rapidly throw the clothes in and get them started. Then I dash for the stair, skipping every other one all the way to the top, slamming the door behind me. But even then I don't feel better because in about an hour I have to go back down to get them out.

~ Katherine White

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Restoring a '55 Chevy

Cars are fun and relaxing. You take something that does not run or is not good for much of anything, and you turn it into a new car. You can take it apart and start all over again. Or you can fix what you have to fix to keep it running. Some people play golf to relax. I find it relaxing to take a car apart.

At one time I had two '55 Chevies. One was a four-door that I restored. I had taken the body off the frame and painted it. Then I put in all new brake lines, fuel lines, steering, and suspension.

I removed the engine and rebuilt it with new parts. The transmission was sent away to be rebuilt. I put the transmission and engine back in the frame, put the body back on the frame, and went to work on the interior of the car.

The hardest part of restoring a car, I think, is the body work. Compared to replacing a quarter panel, replacing the fenders is a simple bolt-on process. The hard part of panel work is having to cut out the rear panel with a torch and welding in a new panel. The old panel has to have enough metal cut off the car to be able to weld on the new panel. However, if you leave too much metal, the new panel won't fit like it should, and if you cut too much, you have holes left to fill in, or nothing to weld the panel to.

It took me about 2 1/2 to 3 years to finish the project, but when it was finished, it was like a new car. The best part of a project like this is, when you're finished, you get lots of compliments about the car from other car enthusiasts.

~ Ed Garcia

Peace

When the storms are raging around me
When the clouds seem black as the night,
Then I feel the peace surround me and
I know everything is all right.

Peace, peace, wonderful peace
Oh how sweet it is.
It gives me understanding and
Helps me happily live.

Peace is a love that calms my fears and
Puts my soul at rest.
It gets me through a troubled day.
It always keeps me at my best.

~ Vickie Hargraves

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Silent Tears

Every tear
Is a drop
Of
Emotion.

Every tear
Carries
Memories
Never forgotten.

Tears
Of happiness,
Sadness,
Loneliness
In so many different ways
At times.

Tears of stories
Written feelings
Never told
From the heart.

Tears crawl like words
On your skin
Hidden words
Silent Tears.

~ Christian Velez

Sunglasses

Sitting here in the shade alone,
I look out into the sunshine and
I can see many wonderful things.
The children are playing nicely together.
I can see a flock of birds gliding in the air.
In a small pond a school of fish are jumping.
In the grass, ants march together two by two.
Even the butterflies flutter with friends.

All these things make me want to go out into the light.
I know the sunlight will hurt my eyes.
Perhaps my sunglasses will help.

~ Amanda JoAnna Edge

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A New Beginning

I went to Naturalization Ceremony on March 31, 2000. That day the weather was very cold and windy. A co-worker of mine gave me a ride to downtown Cincinnati. I walked to the U.S. District Court building. It was very big, warm, and also very beautiful. A security guard came close to me and asked, "How can I help you?"

I told him, "Today, I am going to become a United States citizen!"

He said, "Congratulations!" He explained to me how to get to the room where the ceremony was going to be held. I followed his directions and kept going straight to the elevator door. I then got in and traveled up to the ninth floor. The elevator stopped. The door opened again, and I walked out the door and saw the room on the right hand side. Another security guard in front of the room gave everybody entering a Naturalization application.

I walked in and sat in a corner. I saw that everybody was wearing pretty dresses and sitting with their families. I felt sad because I had no family sitting with me. At 8:30, I met the presiding judge; her name was Judy. She wore a black coat and was escorted into the room by three people. One of them was an elementary math teacher, and the other two were the judge's assistants. Judy stood at her table, smiled, and said, "We welcome all of you in becoming American citizens." Everyone then stood up and recited the Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America. Then we pledged our allegiance to the flag.

I was so excited! At the end of the naturalization program, everyone stood up and told where they were from and what their name was. After that, we went up to get a Certificate of Citizenship. I saw one lady stand up, smile, and give her brother a big hug. Then she turned around and gave her mom a kiss. Another man stood up and yelled, "Oh my God!" He cried a lot and turned around and looked at his family. They took his picture with Judy. When Judy called

my name, I stood up, walked over, shook her hand, and got my certificate. I smiled at her, and she smiled back and said, "Congratulations! Welcome to America."

Suddenly, I felt lonely because nobody I knew was standing. I wished someone I knew like my mom or dad would have been there with me and shared my joy. However, I am proud that I am the first person in my house that got a Citizenship Certificate. After the ceremony, I looked for a cab to take me home.

~ Tri Huynh

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A Family of God's Servants

I had been wearing dentures for a number of years and had many difficulties with them. They were always too big for my mouth. I was able to chew only on one side. Because of these difficulties, I could not digest my food properly and had poor health in various ways.

I needed to replace my dentures. I began searching for a dentist who would accept my insurance. Not many would, but in September 1999, I found a semi-retired dentist on 4th Street in downtown Cincinnati who would take my insurance. I made an appointment with him.

My experience with this dentist was a disaster. He was old and in poor health. His attitude was lousy. He abused me physically, verbally, and emotionally. While I was his patient he had a stroke, but he continued his practice. The dentures he made me were very painful due to a sharp edge that lay on the roof of my mouth. They were also too large. They stuck out like a giant. They were the worst dentures I had ever experienced.

During a follow-up appointment, I told him the dentures were not made right. I showed him the awful sharp edge on the upper plate. He said there was nothing wrong with the dentures. He said the problem was me. Then he took the dentures into the back room, returned a short time later, and roughly pushed them into my mouth. He said he never wanted to see me again. At this point, I lost all hope.

Later I learned from a couple of people who had dentures made by this dentist that they, too, had experienced the same kind of behavior from him. Their dentures were not made properly either, and they have never been able to get them adjusted. They gave up and are in misery.

Fortunately, I discovered Pam at my church. She had studied to be a dental technician. I told her about my experience, and she agreed to look at the dentures. She was shocked at what she saw. She told me they were the worst she had ever seen. She doubted that he had paid even $25 for

them. She was convinced that even if they did fit properly, they would not last.

With Pam's help, I decided to seek a second opinion with the Family Dentistry Center at a Sears store. The dentist we saw there wasn't very helpful. He said there wasn't anything wrong with my dentures and suggested that we return to my original dentist for more adjustments. He said he could make me a new set, but it would cost $2000 because insurance only paid for new dentures every eight years. I left this dentist even more dejected than before.

But God was working for me through Pam. Within a short time, she called to tell me about a program called Dental Options, in which dentists donate their time and pay for all materials. She got an application for me and helped me fill it out. Soon I heard that I had been accepted. I was to call the program coordinator after each appointment to inform her about the quality of my treatment.

My new dentist was Dr. Rolfes, who happened to be Pam's dentist too. When I called for an appointment, his receptionist, Jan, was most pleasant. Her voice convinced me that she really cared for others in a genuine, loving way. Once while I was in the chair, she came back to offer support and encouragement. She really cared about my well-being. Somehow I sensed Dr. Rolfes was the same.

I was right. I took the bus from downtown Cincinnati to his office on Montgomery Road. I still had some anxiety about how Dr. Rolfes would react after seeing my dentures. My anxiety was short-lived. Jan greeted me warmly. She did not ask for my insurance card; she didn't even ask me to sign in. In addition, even though I had arrived early, during their lunch hour, she said I was welcome to wait in the office or go a short distance down the street to eat lunch myself. She was so sweet.

Dr. Rolfes was wonderful. He listened to my story with patience and respect. After examining the dentures, he concluded that they could not be corrected and agreed to make new ones. Throughout our first meeting, Dr. Rolfes showed

great compassion about the terrible experience I had gone through, and his assistant gave me encouragement. Now, at last, I felt blessed. I had unlimited confidence in him.

I returned to Dr. Rolfes's office 15 times because of the care he took to make sure the new dentures fit properly. As part of his routine, I smiled with my face pointed in different directions so he could determine if the gums of the dentures were too large. He asked me to say certain words, such as Mississippi, to make sure that my pronunciation was normal. He took every precaution to make sure that the job was done right.

Because I have a small mouth and a number of bony areas in my gums, Dr. Rolfes had to work extra hard to make sure my dentures fit properly. He eventually had to put a soft liner on the lower plate to avoid excessive pressure. This was not easy for me, but thanks to Dr. Rolfes's professionalism and caring, they turned out just great—the best dentures I have ever had.

At last I can eat without those stomach difficulties I experienced for years. It took a little time to adjust to the new dentures, and the soft lining made my bite different. But the results were good. I'm able to eat better and enjoy salads—something I haven't been able to do for years. This is wonderful. The friendship I gained with Dr. Rolfes and his staff is great.

I believe that Dr. Rolfes and his staff, as well as my new friend Pam, are a family of God's servants. They were kind and patient and gave me not only the medical care I needed but also the emotional support I needed. God used their hands and their generosity to heal me. I will never forget them.

There is always a purpose for the storms in life. In these storms God can work his miracles. This teeth situation was a miracle for me.

~ M. Foltz

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Author Biographies

Fumiko Adair (p. 44)
Finding myself to be a mother of a multi-handicapped child crushed my heart and body. It is hard to keep up myself without support; family, especially my husband, friends and all sorts of professionals helped. Too, finding [my] Self Even Start program and enrolling myself as an ESOL student is very soothing and indispensable. Receiving this honor, I thank people who carry on this program with enthusiasm, including my teachers.

Etta Lorene Bailey (p. 87)
I was born in Dickenson County, Virginia, but I have lived in Ohio for forty-two years. I am a wife, a mother of two, and a grandmother of two. I am retired and enjoy trap shooting, gardening, church, reading, writing, and spending time with my grandchildren.

Christopher Barker (p. 28)
I have been incarcerated for eleven of the last fourteen years, currently at Montgomery County Jail. While incarcerated, I started looking for God because I realized I couldn't do it by myself. Now, my goals are to help others who have been incarcerated, to express myself through my writings, and to be a living example that anyone can change.

Karen Barnes (p. 14)

Jeff Bell (p. 91)

Roberto Benitez (p. 27)

Dawn Bradley (p. 42)
I have a 2-year-old son. I am working toward my GED so I can have my own daycare. I love to read and write poetry.

Diane Brown (p. 19)

Quang Minh Cao (p. 72)
He likes to write, and this is his first year studying English (ESOL) in Scarlet Oaks.

Faith D. Crabtree (p. 13)
Faith has recently received her GED. She looks forward to continuing her education. Among her many talents, writing is one of her favorite things to do!

Twila Cross (p. 33)

Amanda JoAnna Edge (p. 96)
Amanda is the proud new mother of a baby boy! As well as working hard on her math and science so she can go to college this fall, she is also interning as a pharmacy technician. She hopes to pursue that coursework in school.

Philip H. Edwards (p. 56)
I make no illusions to the fact: I don't know the difference between an adverb and a denominator. But my pen is my passport to the past.

Prescious Eutsey (p. 41)
My name is Prescious Eutsey. I attend Lathrop Even Start. I have 2 children, both girls. Jazmin is 3. Rochelle is 8 months.

M. Foltz (p. 99)

Ed Garcia (p. 93)

Carol E. Gessner (p. 17)
I'm the proud mother of two girls and grandmother of 3 grandsons and mother-in-law of the world's greatest son-in-law. I've been line-coordinator at Pierre Foods for ten years, and I enjoy working and learning about different nationalities.

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Renee Glaze (p. 35)

Laura Lee Green-Kulcak (pp. 47, 66)

Vickie Hargraves (p. 94)

Cynthia Harrison (p. 78)
I'm nineteen years old, from Dayton, Ohio, and enrolled in GED classes at Montgomery County Jail. My goal is to get my GED and go to college. I love literature, and my favorite writer is Shakespeare.

Larry Hurd (p. 21)

Tri Huynh (p. 97)
I was born in Vietnam and came to the United States of America on October 10, 1995. I've been working at Pierre Foods for 3 years. I became a United States citizen last summer.

Kum Sun Kim (p. 34)

Mahammed Kutubuddin (pp. 24, 60)
I was born in India and have been in the U.S. for one year. I am married and the proud father of two children. I work at Pierre Foods and attend their Learning Center. My hobbies include stamp and coin collecting.

Lonnie Littleton (p. 4)
I have a dream, and that is to be the world's greatest living poet if there is such a thing. I've been writing since I was a child. I have always wanted to be famous before I die . . . so I am having a race with death. To make a long story short, always put God first and [yourself] last and then maybe [your] dream might just come true.

Art Massengill (pp. 39, 53, 81)
I never dreamed that I would be writing as I am, much less be submitted in a contest. I am excited!

Michael McFadden (p. 7)

Carrie Miller (p. 43)
I am 29 years old and have lived in New Lexington since I was in the 4th grade. I was always in special education classes and have been working on my GED off and on for about 10 years. I'm not going to give up.

Linda Montgomery (p. 18)
Writing is my hobby. I recently bought a typewriter because I want to be able to write more. I am a grandmother of ten grandchildren and I write stories for them. They like for me to read to them. I think reading and writing are very important.

Regina Mulkey (p. 6)
My name is Regina Mulkey. I have been married for five years, and I have a three-year-old son. I'm proud to say this is my third year at the Writers' Conference.

Angela Murphy (p. 85)
I am a mother of two girls and a stepmother of two boys. We joke and call ourselves the little Brady Bunch. The only two differences are we don't have a nanny or a dog, but we do love our animals.

Marjie Mustard (pp. 11, 80)

Anh Phuong Nguyen (pp. 77, 83)
I was born in Vietnam. I work at Pierre Foods, and I attend the Learning Center there. I am working to improve my writing and English skills.

Thuy Nguyen (p. 69)
I am from Vietnam. I've been in the United States ten months.

Tatyana O'Neill (p. 71)

Shirley Pettit (p. 3)
I would like to write children's books.

Mary Rapp (p. 5)

Adam D. Rice (p. 32)
I have always had a keen interest in writing and, thanks to the Writers' Conference, I am even more enthusiastic. I have always believed "if you put your mind to work, it will work for you."

Monique Ross (pp. 38, 40)
Ms. Ross received her GED on February 21, 2001, and scored in the upper 25th percentile in writing. In an essay written during class, she shared that she "would like to be remembered as an inspiration" and her writings demonstrate how she can inspire others.

Carol Rudder (p. 84)
I was born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. We moved to Chicago when I was 5 years old. I lived in California for awhile and ended up in Ohio. I am married and have two children and four grandchildren.

Cynthia Rush (p. 31)
I was born and raised in Beckley, West Virginia. I am attending Project Learn and studying for my GED. Someday I would like to get my poems and stories published and become an author.

Patricia Santos (p. 23)
I'm from Brazil. I've been in the U.S. for 1 year.

Christine Seman (pp. 12, 37)

Dale Sherman (p. 9)

Karen S. Smith (p. 16)
This makes my fourth year of being published in the *Beginnings* series. Pierre Frozen Foods makes this possible for me, by providing the Learning Center for me to further my studies. I love coming to the Writers' Conference. It's always a learning experience.

Toshia Smith (p. 8)
Toshia is a loving, caring mother of 2 girls. She enjoys expressing herself through writing.

Milita Stringer (p. 62)

Heather Tilley (p. 82)
I am a proud parent of two boys, Jamire Westbrook Jr. and Jeremy Tilley. I plan on furthering my education, and I am looking forward to a great new job! I wish all current and future GED students best wishes and luck for their future, just as I have.

Christian Velez (pp. 15, 95)
I was born in New York City, lived in the States for 12 years, moved to Puerto Rico and went to three schools. I lived in Puerto Rico for 6 years. I decided to move to Ohio with my brother and family. Playing in two Latin banks named Latin X-Posure and Fiesta del Soul, we recorded four CDs. I started to write poems 2 years ago and am going to school now at Princeton for my GED.

Katherine White (p. 92)

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Sally White (p. 36)
I'm a mother of seven children and very busy. Having my work recognized has been so exciting for me. I hope to inspire my children to enjoy writing as I have come to.

Earl Willford (p. 55)
I am 77 years old. I spent most of my life working in the oil field. My hobby is playing the guitar and singing country music.

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Honorable Mention Authors

Sandra Aldeen
Sam Sam Ali
LaRonda Allen
Pareece L. Amos
Mariya Androshchuk
Patricia Arreguin
Terri Artis
Mickey Ballou
Debbie Baugh
April Beaudin
Gabriel Bejan
Gabriela Bejan
John Berling
Debra Lyn Blythe
Betty Bohanan
Debbie Bolding
Joseph Bolding
Zoran Borojevic
Guy Bridgeforth
Nada Brkic
Jennifer Bruner
Rose M. Buckner
Glenda L. Burt
Sharon Butcher
Amie Carpenter
Flavio Cenderelli
Vittoria Cenderelli
Anne Cherniuk
Nancy Clapper
Charlene Clark
Jason Clay
Ana Danat
Johnny Daniels
Marie Davis
Hiran K. Debnath
Subhra Debnath
Joyce DeRosa
Francine Dessonet
Donna Diaconu
Patricia Dolin
Alicia Dorio
Kimberly L. Duffee
Ben Earhart
Maria M. Echevestre
Jeana Eldridge
George El-Khoury
Debra Flores
Barbara Garner
Janet Gilkison
Jasmina Gvozdjan
Christian Hairston
Keith Haley
Billie Henderson
Constance Hicks
Vickie Hobbs
Marjorie Holland
Maggie Ickes
Maraget Ison
Kalyani Jagadeesh
German Jaimes
Jan Jay
Alondra Johnson
Lipka Jovic
Maria Knis
Bethany L'Abbe
Pei Z. Lei
Shaw Loh
Marcia Lones

Ruan Luong
Felicia Marinescu
Chad Martin
Edna Martin
Latoya Maske
Donna McKnight
Joyce Means
Dragan Milkovic
Maria Mosincat
Renate Mueller
Amat Musleh
Lynn Mustard
Ysabel Naider
Christel Neubig
Charles Newland
Jayne Nieb
Tammy Norwood
Elena Oancea
Luba Oleynik
Brenda Parker
Regiane Pastura
Violeta Pehab
Milan Pejic
Bibiana Peralta
Marie Elena Perez
Catherine Phillips
Christine Pocock
Tina Powers
Robert Putnam
Hanna Rybak
Safia Sahal
Dottie Sater
Judy Scott
Robert Sergent
Anita Shepherd
Debbie Shepherd
Shannon Showalter
Amber Skaggs
Yuliya Skyra
Inna Slutskaya
Karen W. Smith
Mary Snider
Ewa Staniurska
Rita Starner
Becky Stojanovic
Steve Strubbe
Angela Sweeney
Angelo Sye
Hana Taha
Moneek Tarver
Elizabeth Temesgen
Nora Thomas
Kim Hai Tran
Karen Trent
Lee Tron
Sandy Bausman Turner
Halyna Tvardovska
Claudia Vecchi
Petro Velychko
Pattie Vojtko
Myrtis Walker
Russell Walker
Darren C. Watson
Connie Webb
Karen White
Sandra Williams
Richard Willman
Karen Wilson
Derek Winters
Jennifer Wolfe
Linda Wolfe
Sarah York
Laura Zarconi